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Q7(a)

Explain the impact of successive Land Acquisition Acts on tribal social organization

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2021 · Anthropology GS 2 · 20 marks · Social change and contemporary tribal societies

7.2 Social change and contemporary tribal societies: Impact of modern democratic institutions, development programmes and welfare measures on tribals and weaker sections.

Core demand of the question

- Discuss how successive **Land Acquisition Acts** have affected tribal social organisation
- Keep the answer to a 20-mark length of about 250 words

Revision summary

The 1894 Act made state taking of tribal land routine.

Customary title rarely matched the deed the collector recognised.

PESA inserted gram sabha consultation in Scheduled Areas.

LARR 2013 added consent, social impact, and rehabilitation duties.

Organisation still breaks when territory goes, whatever the statute name.

Introduction

Land acquisition law is the state's power to take land for a public purpose. For tribal social organisation, each successive Act has been a shock to territory, clan, and council, because land is kinship, not only a plot.

Body

Colonial and early republican law

- The **Land Acquisition Act, 1894** made a collector's award the normal path. Forest and village commons were easy to name as waste.
- Mines, dams, and towns after independence used the same 1894 spine. **S. C. Roy's** Munda-Oraon land custom had no standing equal to a deed.

Reform attempts

- **Fifth Schedule** transfer bans tried to stop private alienation. Acquisition by the state still punched through.
- **PESA** required gram sabha consultation in Scheduled Areas, a direct attempt to put the council back in the path of the file.

LARR 2013

- The **Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013** added consent thresholds, social impact, and R&R.

- On paper this recognises that acquisition breaks habitation, shrine, and livelihood together.
- Amendments and state rules have often weakened consent. Mining corridors still treat tribal organisation as a resettlement camp problem.

Effect on organisation

- When fields and groves go, lineage authority tied to land thins. Youth become labour. The parha cannot find a company.
- Resettlement mixes clans and religions, which is why church or party may replace the old council.
- **N. K. Bose's** absorption then happens as proletarian caste-in-the-slum, not as a ranked village occupation.

Continuity

- Successive Acts changed procedure more than they restored a territorial tribe. Social organisation follows the remaining land.

Flow diagram

LAA 1894 -> Take land as waste
PESA -> Gram sabha
LARR 2013 -> Consent SIA R and R
Take land as waste -> Clan council thin

Conclusion

From 1894 to **LARR 2013** the state learned to pay and sometimes to consult. Tribal organisation still unravels when territory is taken, because clan and council were land-based.

Facts & figures

Land Acquisition Act 1894

Colonial statute used for a century of dams, mines, and towns.

LARR 2013

Replaced the 1894 core with consent, social impact assessment, and R&R.

Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA)

Requires community consultation on land in Scheduled Areas.

Social impact assessment

LARR tool meant to record habitation and livelihood loss, not only acre price.